Issue 115 June 2012

KNOTTING MATTERS

The Magazine of the International Guild of Knot Tyers

INTERNATIONAL GUILD OF KNOT TYERS

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Front Cover A basket of eggs supplied just after Easter by Jim Caswell of Australia - look for more of his splendid kangaroo leather work in How I Did It, this issue.

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Letters to The Editor
The Things You Say!!

Sir,

The definition of knots and their classification have long bedevilled me, but I have come to no definitive conclusions. However, one may only divine the answers if one knows which questions must be asked in the first place.

At the risk of appearing presumptuous, yet desirous of providing some impetus to the discussion, I should like to take up the cudgels in the hope that those who have more experience and knowledge than I do will take over this exegesis.

I believe that we cannot define the knot until we define what it is that constitutes it. Therefore, I propose that the definition of the Knotting Material is : Material that is continuously flexible and has a linear dimension of greater magnitude than its cross-sectional area [*Length and area cannot logically be compared - Ed*]. This seems to be a bit vague, but includes rope, cord, string, leather thong, and such material as strips of bark, or vines (for the explorer amongst us), but excludes such things as chain, which is only partially flexible [*Does this preclude wire and steel bars? - Ed.*]. Since no cross-sectional description is given, it also includes both flat and round material.

A knot then, may be defined as: ***The interaction of parts of a single piece, or of more than one piece, of the Knotting Material, so as to provide a stable structure, independent of any other entity.*** This definition introduces some difficulties. For instance, I can take a cord and, winding it about itself many times, cause a stable structure to be formed, but is it a knot? Well yes it is, but do we wish to catalogue it as such? This brings us to the second proposition: ***A knot must be of a structure that is definable, describable and reproducible.*** The aforementioned dog's breakfast of a structure can be classified as "spurious", or some such thing.

Another problem arises when we consider those things which we normally take for granted as being knots, but do not fit into this definition - such things as a Round Turn and a Marlinespike Hitch, neither of which maintains its nature unless supported by a secondary object. I consider these to be "knot elements", much as a single Wall Knot, or a single Crown Knot are.

We come now to nomenclature. The nomenclature of knots has traditionally been left to personal choice. Knots have been given names for generally one of four reasons: The knot is named by, or for, its inventor (the Matthew Walker knot, the Simple Simon knot); the name is defined by its usage (the Footrope Knot, the Sheet Bend); the appearance of the knot defines its name (the Star Knot, the Rose Knot) or the knot is named according to the method of its construction (the Double Diamond Knot, the Twice Crowned Knot). There is nothing inherently wrong with this system, unless duplication, or ambiguity arise.

Defining a knot by its usage may not be unambiguous, as more than one knot may be used for some specific purpose. Several knots have been used as Footrope Knots, although the "real" Footrope Knot, according to Clifford Ashley, is the Single Crown and Wall knot.

Defining a knot by the method of its construction also causes ambiguities. In the Ashley Book of Knots (page 10), Clifford Ashley contends that: "....*either a different form, a different way of tying, or a different use constitutes a distinct knot*." This introduces some difficulties. For example, there are six ways to tie the Jug Sling Knot, three of which produce a knot which is a mirror-image of that which is produced by the other three methods. In both cases, the structures are identical, no matter which of the three methods is employed. The two mirror-images differ only in the directionality of their tucks. Have I produced six knots, or two? Or is there only one Jug Sling Knot, defined by its usage?

Attempting to define the structure of a knot may be an exercise in futility and becomes increasingly difficult with increasing complexity. This is why a demonstration of the tying of a knot will be far more instructive than a description, howsoever detailed it may be.

Nevertheless, in order to provide a complete definition of a knot, an attempt must be made to indicate its constructional details. This facet of the subject may be the most difficult but should, I think, be included.

Many attempts have been made to classify knots in groupings, generally as defined by usage. Ashley's book has far more general classifications than does the book of Graumont and Hensel, but even so there are many knots which defy classification and end up in sections entitled "Occupational Knots", or "Decorative Knots". I have tried to develop a better system, but so far, I have had no better success than has anyone else. Perhaps a system of Classes and Sub-classes could be considered. For example, I consider two-strand button and lanyard knots to be a sub-class of multi-strand button and lanyard knots, since whereas almost all n-strand knots can be tied with n+1 strands, this does not always apply where n=2.

I regret that I have not managed to lay down much in the way of definitive categorization, but I hope that at least this will activate some lively discussion, particularly from our more senior and more knowledgeable members.
John Heselton

Lindsey

In KM 114 Frank Brown shared with us his method of cataloguing his book collection using Excel. Frank has clearly made a good job of this so the following suggestions are made in the spirit of helping others who may be unused to Excel but would like to make a similar list (maybe not books but any list).

1. When setting up your list use only one line at the top for column headers and make sure that these are unique names. If you do this, many of the tools in Excel will become usable or a lot easier.
2. Rather than entering Y in a column use (numeral) 1. It's generally simpler to add up a column if you want to know how many entries there are. Going a stage further you can reduce the number of columns

by using codes. As an example taken from Frank's sheet - columns E, F and G could be compressed into one by using T,P and D as in column R (but without commas - always try to avoid commas in data unless essential.

3. When you do use codes you will need a list of them. Better to put this on a separate sheet so that if, for example, you delete a row you don't delete one of your codes by mistake. And always put the code and its meaning in 2 columns side by side.

I have kept this note deliberately short - an Excel tutorial would fill a dozen KMs! But if anyone is using Excel and is either having difficulty setting up a sheet or knows what they want to do but cannot work out how, then by all means drop me an email (barry@lizziemint.co.uk) and I'll see if I can help you. Enclosing a copy of your spreadsheet or a part of it helps a lot but do let me know which version of Excel you are using.

Barry Mault
Frmr Hon. Sec.

Short Yarn

At a local builder's yard I helped a driver of a delivery firm secure a load with a rope. I made a comment about the messy end of the rope and recommended that he tidy it up, even if it was only with a bit of insulation tape. He responded by saying that every time he did whip or back splice his ropes, one of the other drivers would pinch it.

Frank Brown

Dear Lindsey
When I made this bellrope [***see back cover - Ed***] for some friends in the Blue Mountains in Australia, to use on the old school bell that hangs outside their front door, I didn't envisage having to make it snake proof. However it recently survived a thorough investigation by this beautiful 6 foot diamond python. I wonder how many other wild creatures visit it when no-one is looking?
Regards
Penny Bodger

Dear Lindsey,

Another little something which might interest Member John Heselton K.M.114. P.7 The " Messenger strap" that he talks on, is in fact extremely old, it was used in Ancient Egypt and an illustration of one that was found in a 5th C trash dump in Berenike [***Berenice Troglodytica***], southern Egypt can be seen on page 54 in the Chapter on Ropes and Knots in Ancient Egypt by Willemina Wendrich, in the book sponsored by the Guild in 1996, entitled "History and Science of Knots". Further, in the days of sail, in Nelson's time before the metal screw shackle was invented, this "Gadget", known then and still today at sea as a "Toggle and Becket", was commonplace.

Roger Carter

Hi, Lindsey,

I'm an IGKT-NAB member living in Florida, and I just read Tony Fisher's Universal Knot Catalogue proposal in the most recent issue of Knotting Matters. I'm very interested in helping work on this project. I'm a Ph.D. student at the University of South Florida, studying Computer Science & Engineering, and I have many skills relevant to this project (i.e. database design, creation, administration, backup, programming, etc.).

I do disagree with one point that Tony makes, and that is the value of a Wiki. I think the knot catalogue should have a wiki component, because that provides a way that people can contribute their own knowledge without extra cost, and it is a natural form of peer review. Because anyone can edit, anyone can also modify and correct. Even with a wiki component, the definitive catalogue could be something we don't expose publicly, but perhaps we can draw from the wiki to populate the database as the information grows. Anyway, the specifics of the catalogue we can discuss as the project matures and we form a committee for it.

I would very much like to be kept informed on the status of this project and of ways in which members can contribute. Thanks for your time and reply.

Michael Nachtigal, President, IEEE Computer Society, USF Chapter
Doctoral candidate, teaching assistant, Department of Computer Science and Engineering, University of South Florida, ENB 118, Tampa, FL, 33620-5399

The Greeks Have A Word For It

by Richard Hopkins

A few years ago I was asked to assist in the construction of an Iron Age chariot and wrote about it for KM. The frame had to be tied with rawhide and the pole and yoke were also attached with lashings of the same material because the archaeologists had found no evidence of metal in these parts of the original which we were reproducing, so deduced that it had been lashed together.
I have become good friends with the wheelwright, Robert Hurford, who did all the clever stuff – the wheels, pole, axle, yoke and frame, and we have cooperated on several different designs of chariot since that first one. Examples of Hittite and Mycenean patterns have been filmed on the ringing plains of windy Troy and a Roman racing chariot was put through its paces at the Roman Hippodrome in Colchester.
Recently Robert asked if I had come across the word *zugodesmon*. ***Ζυγόδεσμυ*** It is a word that does not occur very often and is used by Homer to describe the yoke binding which tied the yoke to the pole. Homer says it was nine cubits long, which, allowing for some variation in the length of the cubit gives a lashing of about thirteen feet. Homer is describing the preparation of the cart used to collect the body of Hector after his death at the hands of Achilles in front of Troy. The yoke is bound with three turns to the left and right, made fast to the post and the tongue is bent underneath.
What caught the wheelwright's attention was that the length mentioned by Homer was the same as that which we used to join the pole to the yoke. The authors of the article in which the word appeared found it hard to believe, from their academic standpoint, that this length would be needed to tie the yoke to the pole and spent some time trying to argue that the lashing was used to reinforce the pole to prevent splitting or was used as a brace to keep the yoke in a rigid orientation. I assume they were working from a theoretical perspective but had not had an opportunity to tie the two bits of wood together in the manner which we found most effective.

Zugodesmon occurs again, many years later, in Arrian and Plutarch when describing Alexander dealing with the Gordian Knot. In this instance the lashing was made with Cornel bark with the ends of the lashing concealed. Again the authors seem surprised at the choice of material. Cornel (or dogwood) bark makes strong cord and the slender shoots can also be used in the same way as willow to bind a variety of items, so I see no possible reason to be skeptical. The range of natural material that can be used for cord-making still amazes me after many years study so perhaps their surprise is understandable.

In all the above I have relied on the translation given in the article as my paperback Penguin edition of the Iliad only mentions leather straps, but the practical answers have come from experience.

Remembering that Heinrich Schliemann discovered Troy using his copy of Homer as a guide we can see that not only did the Greeks have a word for it but they also got the measurements correct as well.

The authors [*Littauer and Crouwel*] are world experts on chariots, so for those wishing to read the item that gave rise to this short article you can consult:

Journal of Hellenistic Studies 108 1999 193 – 196 *New light on Priam's wagon* by Mary Aitken Littauer and Joost H. Crouwel or its reprint in *Selected Writings on Chariots and other early vehicles, riding and harness* by M A Littauer and J H Crouwel edited by Peter Raulwing, Brill Leiden, Boston, Köln 2002.

In these pictures of a yoke to pole lashing the antler is used as a *hester* going through the pole to anchor the joint. The rawhide is still wet and will shrink as it dries to tighten its grip making a very secure fixture.

The School of Hard Knots

by 'Tottles'

Knots cannot be done in only two dimensions. When things meet in Flatland[1] they must stop and back off or go around one another, and even the flattened 3-lead x 3-bight Turk's Head layout known as Borromean rings[2] (*next page*) needs flyovers and underpasses to interlace, although no two rings actually link together.

So, we must be mindful, as we contrive to tie from 2D knot diagrams in our how-to manuals, that knotting is a 3D pursuit. For example, to create a Matthew Walker knot (ABOK#678, 682 or 683), one needs to visualize the interlocked overhand or half-knots within it, as well as the even tension needed to achieve the wrap-around outer spirals. Then again, many Chinese knots (such as ABOK#2460, 2461 or 2462) consist of two layers, which must be encouraged to separate – one sliding atop the other – to achieve the finished knot.

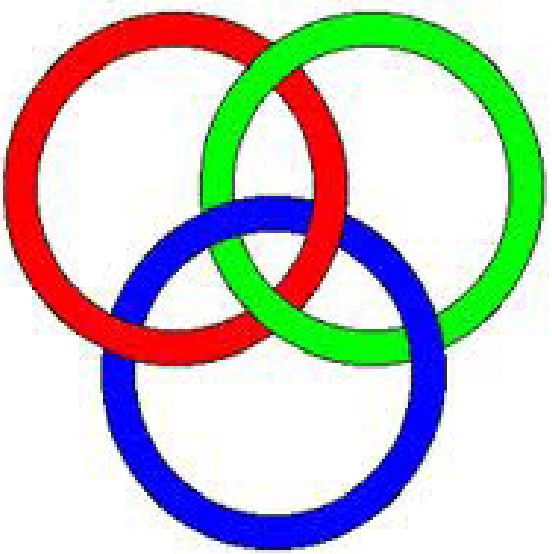
But, while professors of knot theory admit that it is nigh impossible to visualize a fourth spatial dimension, at least one[3] implied that, while knots cannot be tied in 4D, they can be untied in 4D.

My soul is an entangled knot,
Upon a liquid vortex wrought
By Intellect in the Unseen residing,
And thine doth like a convict sit,
With marlinespike untwisting it,
Only to find its knottiness abiding;
Since all the tools for its untying
In four-dimensional space are lying …

(The Life of James Clerk Maxwell,
'A Paradoxical Ode', page 649)

But 4D knotting by indirect methods may not be precluded altogether, it seems, since in a 1938 issue of a learned American journal[4], a pseudonymous group of math students suggested that to catch a lion in the Sahara Desert: We transport the desert into 4-space. It is then possible to carry out a deformation so that the lion can be returned to 3-space in a knotted condition. It is then helpless.

[1] Abbott, Edwin E., Flatland – A Romance of Many Dimensions, pub. Basil Blackwell, Oxford (1926)
[2] Today this trio of rings is a familiar sort of Venn diagram to represent data, but it featured in an 1876 mathematical paper by Peter Guthrie Tait (1831-1901), and is named after the Italian Renaissance family who used it in its coat of arms in the 15th century. Earlier still, it symbolized the Christian trinity in a 13th century French manuscript, and back in 846 CE was a Viking logo of triangular form.
[3] James Clerk Maxwell (1831-79), Scottish physicist, arguably the greatest scientist of the 19th century.
[4] Petard, H. of Princeton, N.J. American Mathematical Monthly, 'A Contribution to the Mathematical Theory of Big Game Hunting', Method 7 (of 11) A Topological Method.



Dear Lindsey,

Having conferred with Owen Nuttall, we think that Members might be interested in the following.;
Owen is quite correct in thinking that the "complication in cordage" that we now call the bowline is extremely old, and almost certainly was known to the ancient Egyptians, who had a remarkable calendar of knots, but of course they didn't know it by that name. The first English language reference to the knot, as far as is known, is in "A Sea Grammar" by Capt. John Smith, He of Virginia, and Princess Pocahontas fame. He actually published in 1627, 17 years before Capt. Manwayring that Owen wrote of. In fact Smith and Manwayring were friends, and some Nautical Historians theorise that Smith plagiarised some, if not all, of Manwayring's work, but managed to find a publisher first.

Now to explain how the knot earned its present name;. Richard Henry Dana jr., famous for his book "Two Years Before the Mast", also wrote a Seamanship Manual entitled " The Seaman's Friend" in 1879, in which he writes " *BOWLINE: (pronounced.= BO-LIN.) " A rope leading forward from the leech of a square sail, to keep the leech well out when sailing close hauled. A vessel is said to be "On a bowline" or "On a taught bowline", when she is close hauled.*"

Earlier in 1848 Capt. Geo. Biddlecombe wrote in his "Art of Rigging". " *BOWLINES – The ropes fastened to the bowline bridles on the leeches or sides of the square sails. They are used, when the wind is unfavourable, to extend the windward edges of the sails tight forward and steady; without which they would be all shivering and rendered useless.*" I think that explains the use of the bowline, and over 200 years earlier Capt. Smith wrote, in the quaint unrestrained English of his day, his thoughts on the Knot itself thus : "*The BOLING KNOT is so firmely made and fastened by the bridles into the creengles of the sailes, they will breake or the saile will split , before it will slip* " Praise indeed, and I think [this] illustrates the esteem in which the knot was held in the days of sail.

Yrs. Roger Carter.

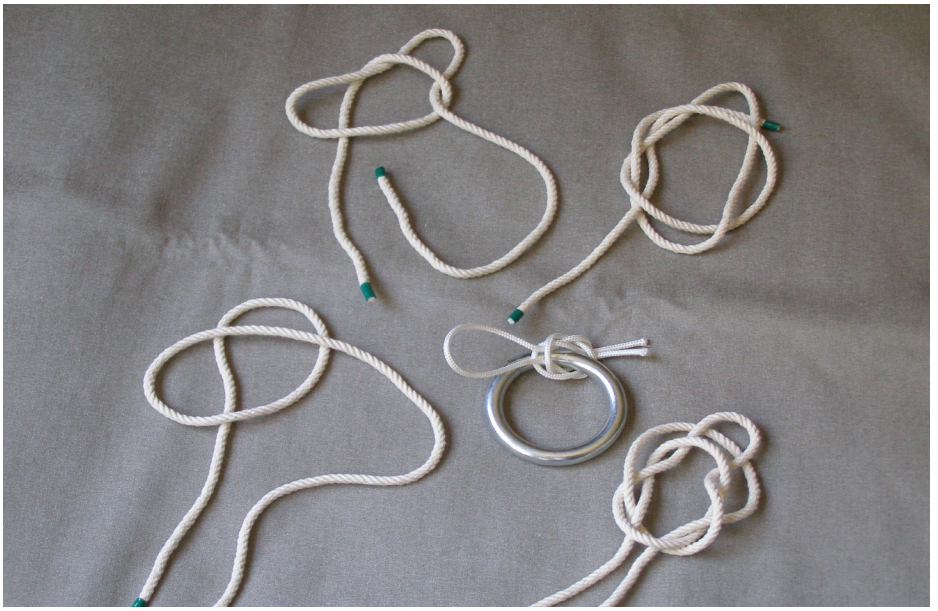
Dear Lindsey:

It is unclear to me why one would wish to tie a Jug Sling Knot around a mast, but in the event, it certainly can be done, using a method which I would describe as the Threading Method - much in the same way in which some mats are tied. Any knot that is tied in the bight can be tied in the end, although the degree of difficulty increases exponentially with the complexity of the knot. The photograph shows the knot tied around an annulus [*ring*].

The Jug Sling Knot is a simple structure, and the method is explained by the surrounding elements. Firstly, a turn is taken around the object, the end being laid over the turn so as to show two bights. A bight from the end is then pulled out from under the turn as depicted; the end being then led once more around the object, then beneath the structure and up through the lower bight of the original turn. Following this, the end is led below the bight that was pulled up, once more around the object, then threaded over-under-over-under, to complete the knot.

Best wishes,

John Heselton.



Lindsey,

These photographs depict some beautiful work by Bill Meakin of Hucknall, Notts, UK. The tallest crook in the centre of the group of walking sticks and crooks was presented to The Rt. Revd. Paul Butler, Bishop of Southwell & Nottingham for use in the diocese.

The circles are part of Bill's Christmas decorations and the candlesticks are at Sutton-in-Ashfield Sailing Club.

Barry Mault

[Anyone else notice the carver's error in the rope? Ed]

Dear Lindsey,

IGKT France recently held its AGM and a number of British members of the branch attended and managed to do some sight-seeing along the way. On the return journey we visited the Château Royal D'Amboisem a few miles outside the city of Tours. This Château claims to be the first expression of the Renaissance in the Loire valley and also contains the tomb of Leonardo da Vinci. By about 1560 the royal court had taken up residence in Paris which has remained the capitol ever since. Subsequently the Château had a mixed history and what remains is now only about one fifth of the original. But enough of culture.

In one room, now called the Franciscan antechamber, there is an ornate fireplace with an interesting carved stone panel above it. The carvings represent intertwined ropes symbolizing the Franciscan monastic order and also the decorative chain of the Order of St Michael. I have attached a photograph [*below*] which shows the carvings. A further knot can be seen [*left*] between the cockle shells surrounding the shield.

Apart from the magnificent work on show at the French AGM in the Corderie Royale in Rochefort this was the knotting highlight of the week.

Best wishes, Richard Hopkins.

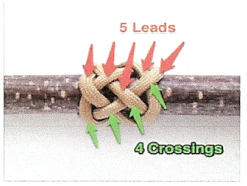
[Anyone else notice the carver's error in the rope? Ed]

Turk's Heads Using Tiles (THUT)

by Darvis Jansons

Turk's Head Using Tiles (THUT)

Darvis Jansons

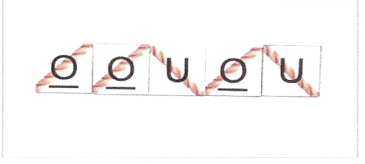


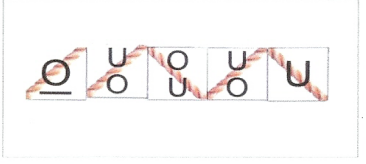
We will use homemade tiles and some coins to generate the crossing pattern for a Turk's Head knot.
Note that a Turk's Head knot (TH) has one less crossing than it has leads, as can be seen from the picture. We will need this later. (The leads are the strands running around the knot and bights are the loops at the end of the knot. We talk about a knot as a 5 Lead 4 Bight TH, for instance).

The tiles come in three types. We use O for an OVER crossing and U for an UNDER crossing.
1) An O one side and a U above an O the other
2) A U one side and an O above U on the other
3) One extra tile to mark the end because there is one more lead than crossing.
We have added lines of rope on the tiles to show the direction of the top strand at the crossing. On the O tile the line runs from bottom left to top right and the other way on the U tile. The tiles are about one inch square (25 mm). We start with the single letter facing up.We arrange the tiles in a row to represent the crossings we want in the knot. For a regular TH, sometimes called basket weave, this will be a row of alternating O and U.

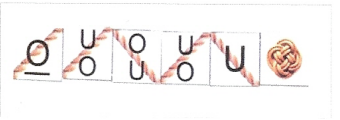
We need to construct some tiles

Let's choose a pattern to use as an example





We choose / / \ / \ which gives us the tiles OOUOU. Once we have the tiles in a row we can create the crossing pattern for each direction. The letters currently show only the crossing when we go to the bottom of the jig. To form the crossings for heading to the top we start at each end of the tiles and flip both tiles over if they are the same, both an O or both a U. If they are different, one an O the other a U, we leave them alone. We then do this with the second in from each end and so on until we reach the middle. If there is a middle tile it is always the same as itself, so we flip it over. The top row of letters now shows the crossing we make when going to the top of the jig. The bottom row when going to the bottom of the jig.



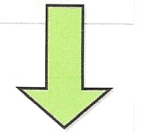
We put the extra tile on the end because the number of leads is always one more than the number of crossings. We cover the tiles with coins. The crossings are revealed as we tie the knot. The end tile doesn't need a coin as it is for counting only. We have 6 tiles and so 6 leads in our knot. We need to choose the number of bights so that the number of bights and number of leads have no divisor in common other than 1. For our example, we choose 5 bights.

Constructing the jig

We construct a jig from a piece of material and some sticks. Here we use some hessian and cocktail sticks. Using a jig this way means we can form the knot in situ if we want to. We need one stick for each bight, so we need 5 sticks. We attach the cord to the top of one of the sticks. We split the leads into two halves one for each step. One half for going top to bottom and the other going bottom to top. In our example we need to step along by 6, this halves neatly into 3 and 3. (If the leads are odd we round one half down and the other up. For example 5 'halves' into 2 and 3). We will zig zag across the jig moving along by the total number of leads each time we arrive back at the top.

Counting along the sticks

We count along 3 sticks to the bottom stick and tuck under the end of the stick to hold it in place. We count along another 3 sticks and tuck under top stick. BUT, we have crossed another strand. We need to know what kind of crossing we need to make, under or over. We do this by counting along the tiles by the number of bights and lowering the coin. We don't remove the coin completely as we need to count from this position next time. We can see that this crossing should be an UNDER. We take the cord off the top stick and make an under crossing by going UNDER the existing strand. And here we can see the altered crossing on the jig. We count along another 3 sticks to the bottom. We cross one strand and we can see we need to go UNDER.



It is worth noting that the number of crossings going top to bottom is the same as the number of crossings on the previous bottom to top. The types of crossing can, of course, be different.

continued on page 29.....

Jottings From Our President

The thirtieth anniversary AGM has now come and gone. The weekend was splendidly organised by our recent Honorary Secretary, Barry Mault. We are extremely grateful for all his hard work. The meeting was well attended and we were delighted to have the company of sixty-six members from eight countries – Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Japan, UK and USA, together with their guests. [***See photographs in center spread - Ed***]

The business part of Saturday was dominated by discussion and voting on four amendments to the constitution. All the amendments were passed by very large majorities. For clarity, I feel I should paraphrase some of the reasoning behind these amendments – and apologise to those of you who feel that I should have made all of this clear earlier. Barry and I have investigated the standing of the IGKT Council under UK law. The IGKT is constituted as an educational charity under UK law. This limits what we can do and puts a significant responsibility on the Council members, who are the legal trustees of this charity. UK charities MUST have members who are UK residents as a majority on all boards of trustees; and UK members must be in a majority at all meetings. Unfortunately, we have no leeway in this matter – that's the law under which we are constituted. It was this situation that led to the requirement for the Secretary and Treasurer to be UK residents in Amendment 1 tabled at the AGM.

The second part of this amendment, reducing the size of the Council to 7 members, was a reversion to the rules of some years ago. The number had been increased to 9 to allow us to have overseas members – something which, as I have described, is difficult, if not illegal.

As you may imagine, the discussion of these changes was lengthy and forthright. The limitations imposed by our status as a charity under UK law really constrain our commitment to being truly international. Therefore, I was very pleased when, at the end of the debate, this motion from the floor was carried without objection:

"The meeting requests that the Council review the Guild's structure, with a view to moving the IGKT into the 21st century, while maintaining its international status. The Council is asked to do whatever it deems necessary (including obtaining paid professional help if necessary) and report back to the 2013 AGM."

It is unfortunate that we were originally advised to be constituted as a UK educational charity. We are an international, non-profit club of like-minded members and we need to try to reconcile this with our current charitable status. I and your Council are charged with investigating this during the next year and we will do our best to return with a feasible, long-term solution.

On a lighter and happier note, I hope that by now most of you will have received the splendid book, ***The Sailor and His Knots***, which forms a significant part of our 30th anniversary celebration. We are much indebted to Founder Member Des Pawson, who has both given access to his own, rare, copy of this book and done much of the work in bringing the new edition to print. I hope that some of you will wish to avail yourselves of the beautiful and very collectible, limited-edition, hard-bound version – I think it's a gem.

We have been informed by our web-mistress that the current password protection for our membership list is not sufficient. Accordingly we have to remove this facility from the web-site until we can find a solution. If you would like an up-to-date membership list, please contact me directly.

With this issue of KM is a DVD of pdf files of all the issues from 1 – 100. Although the later ones were already in electronic form, we are deeply indebted to former KM Editor Colin Grundy for his very considerable hard work in the scanning and OCR of the earlier copies. There is also an Index, compiled by Lesley Wyatt. She too has our grateful thanks for taking on this very lengthy task.

Finally (at long last, you say), and specifically to UK members:

******** WE NEED YOUR HELP! ********

Over 60% of the UK group present at the AGM had been members for more than 10 years (and some for much longer!) Most of them have been on the Council, organised AGMs or half-yearly meetings and run other events. By doing this they have helped us successfully to grow for the last 30 years. Of necessity, this means that they are greying or balding or both. It is ESSENTIAL that some of our younger, newer members become involved in running the UK part of the Guild. Otherwise, in a few years, the increasing age of active UK members will make it really difficult for us to continue. PLEASE give serious thought to helping, volunteering, attending and even organising meetings.

***YOUR GUILD NEEDS YOU! ***

Center pages, clockwise from lower left, 2011 T-spike with handle covered with half-hitching, 2011, car keys anyone?, 2011 bellrope by Joe Bennett, 2011 Colin Grundy and Jane Bamford intent on ...what?, 2011 braided leather Turk's Head?, 2012 corner of Jeff Wyatt's work, 2012 knot-tyers trying their hand at splicing with some tough arborist line, 2012, the arborist line taken apart with rogue's yarn along the lower edge and Dr. Jan Vos's work on the table, 2012 sea-chest becket, 2012 Hoylake street furniture, 2012, Europa Chang-Dawson with Barry Mault's grandson as student, 2011 supper plate and 2012 screen in macrame by Liz Pawson with 2012 cake!!

The excellent photographs shown on the center pages and at right are only a few of those included by Henk and Ge Bos Thoma at the 2011 meeting in Coventry. Contact them if you would like to see more of their photo-reporting (details at right lower).

The International Guild Of Knot Tyers
Annual meeting at Rough Close
20/21 mei 2011
Coventry

Continuous informal exchange of information *Lonnie Bogs*

This picturebook is dedicated to Colin Grundy and Jane Bamford

Henk en Ge Bos

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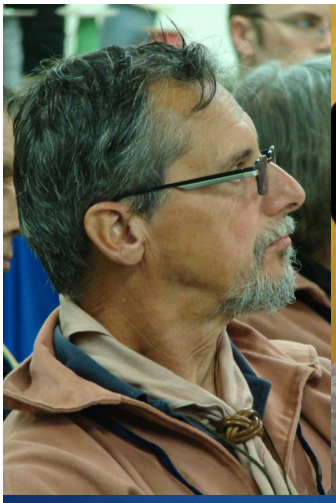
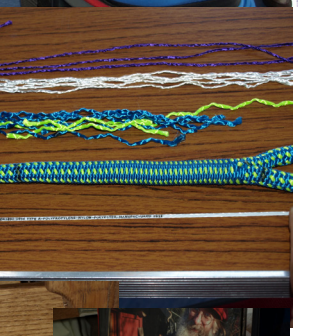


INTERNATIONAL GUILD OF KNOT TYERS
30th ANNIVERSARY
1982 – 2012

BELL ROPE
made by
Joe Bennett
IGKT Member
Greenock SCOTLAND

JEFF'S TOOLS
HANDS OFF!!!

INTERNATIONAL
KNOTTYERS
NIVERSARY
2012



KNOTS
STEP BY STEP

Why Go To So Much Trouble?

by Tim Lane

"Why go to so much trouble?"

I was asked that question recently as I worked on a simple (well maybe not so simple for me) eye splice. The locale for the question was Camp Boddie Boy Scout Camp located in Eastern North Carolina. Our Council Camporee was being held at camp in order to repair damage from Hurricane Irene last September.

The campfire circle at Camp Boddie had a double line railing that had been damaged by fallen trees from the storm. After replacing posts, I was assigned the task of replacing line which had been donated to the camp. In a book given to me by my friend and fellow IGKT member, Burl Williams, I tried to master a Manrope Knot at one end of the line. After several attempts I decided that I did not like the results and decided maybe an eye splice might be more functional for my purpose.

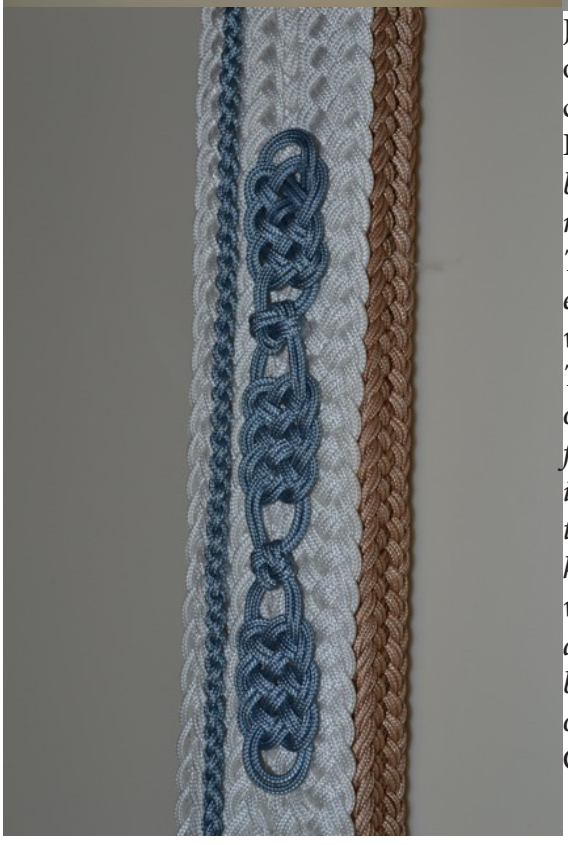
While working on the line, fellow scoutmasters and young scouts had much advice on how to speed up the process "and just be done with it" as they say in our area. "Why don't you tie a big knot in the end and be finished?" or "Hey you can just wrap the post and tie it off". This presented a great opportunity to tell them, as a card carrying member of the International Guild of Knot Tyers, I wanted to use something more finished. "You are a member of what kind of club?" "Really?! There is a guild of knot tyers?!"

I had the same response when several years ago, Burl Williams came into my office and asked (actually told) me to fill out an application to the IGKT. I had just become the scoutmaster of a new troop and had asked for Burl's help in teaching knot basics to my scouts. "Why don't you learn yourself and here is a great resource, the IGKT".

In the time I have known Burl, he has conducted numerous knot demonstrations at scout shows, shopping malls, and schools. There have been many youth that have learned how to tie their shoes during a knot demonstration by Burl (I learned how to tie my hiking boots in a way they would stay tied while on the trail!). When teaching my fellow hiking buddies I was asked "Hey where did you learn that knot? Why from my IGKT buddy Burl Williams. I..G..K…what?"

Yes, Burl has been a great Ambassador for our organization. We even recruited a new member recently when Burl and I met with Keith Dunn to discuss how to tie Rescue bracelets (Solomon bars). And that fire circle at Camp Boddie? After several attempts, I had to call in my friend Burl to help finish the job (see picture).

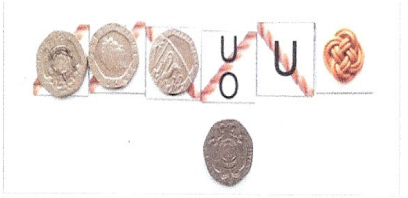
Tim Lane
IGKT member
Nashville, North Carolina USA

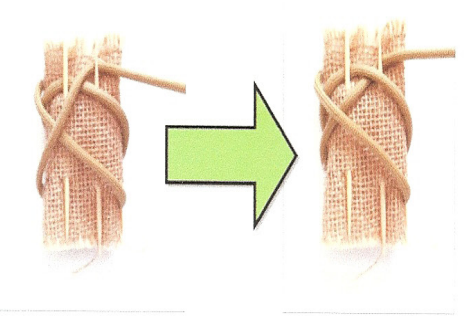


Joe Bates of the Knot In The Middle Branch of the USA has made this remarkable frame covering. Here is the description from Joe Bates: "*The corners are covered in the same braid as parts of the top and sides, but the reverse side which doesn't show the tracks. Then there is a 3 x 4 Turk's head nearby on each leg, a five strand star knot in both the white and blue.*

The bottom has an extended ocean plait mat on it to cover a seam and a celtic knot for fun on the flat surface just above. A matching Celtic knot is on the top of the frame, too. The sides have a combination of Celtic knots and reef knots to tie them together. It was a fun project, but it took me ages to get around to finishing it. You need a LOT of braid to cover even a small frame like this one. It's only set up for an 8 x 10 frame." Great work Joe! - Ed.

continued from page 19.....





On our next bottom to top step we cross 2 strands. We count along the tiles from our last position, marked by the lowered coin, by the number of bights. We slide this coin down and remove the previously slid coin. We can see the crossings we need to make are UNDER, UNDER since we read the top line when going to the top of the jig. We change the crossings on the jig to match.

We now know we will cross 2 strands going top to bottom, so we can make the appropriate crossings as we go. The crossings will be OVER, UNDER since we are going to the bottom and so read the bottom row of letters. We carry on counting along by 3's on the jig and counting along by the number of bights on the tiles. We always match the number of crossings revealed on the tiles to match the number of crossings found on the jig. We should end back at the start on the jig with all the crossings revealed. We can now remove the jig and tighten the knot. And, if required, double or triple by following path of knot around again.

Branch
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lait mat
t for
match-
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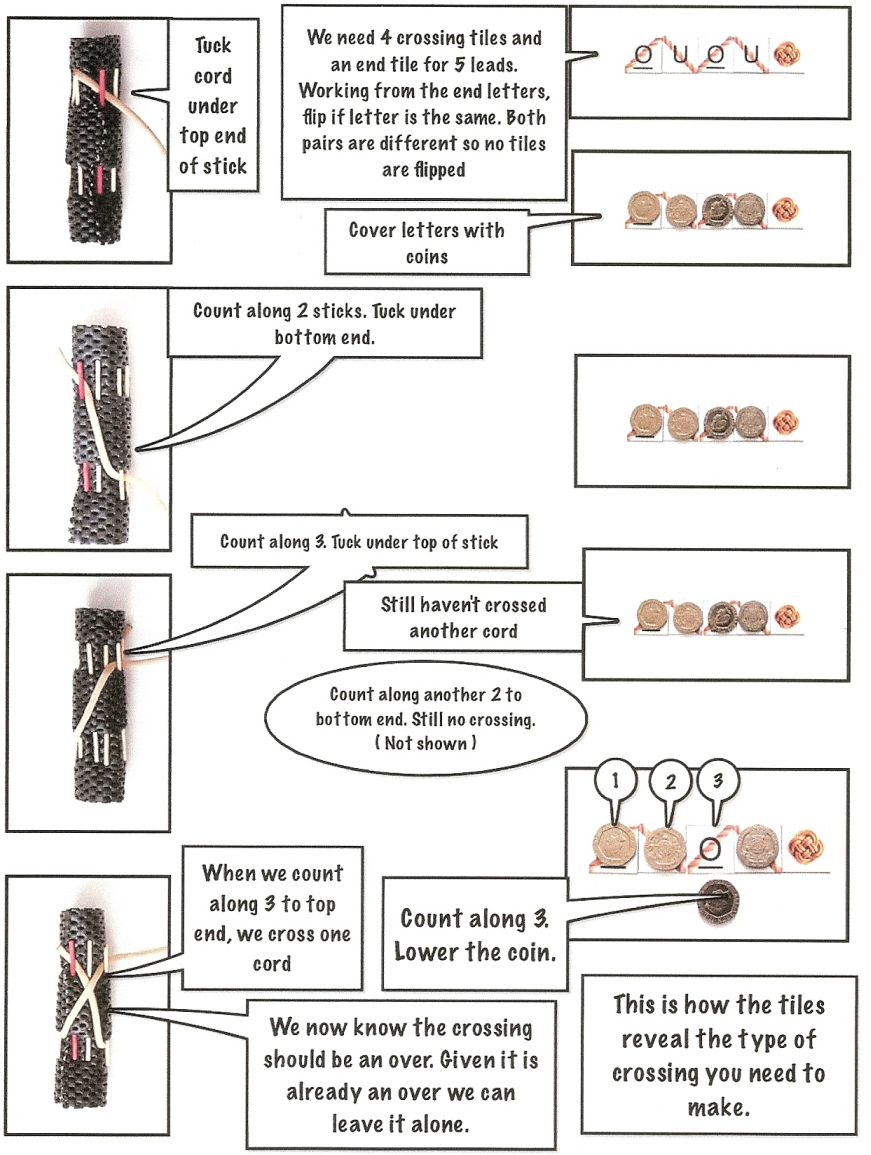
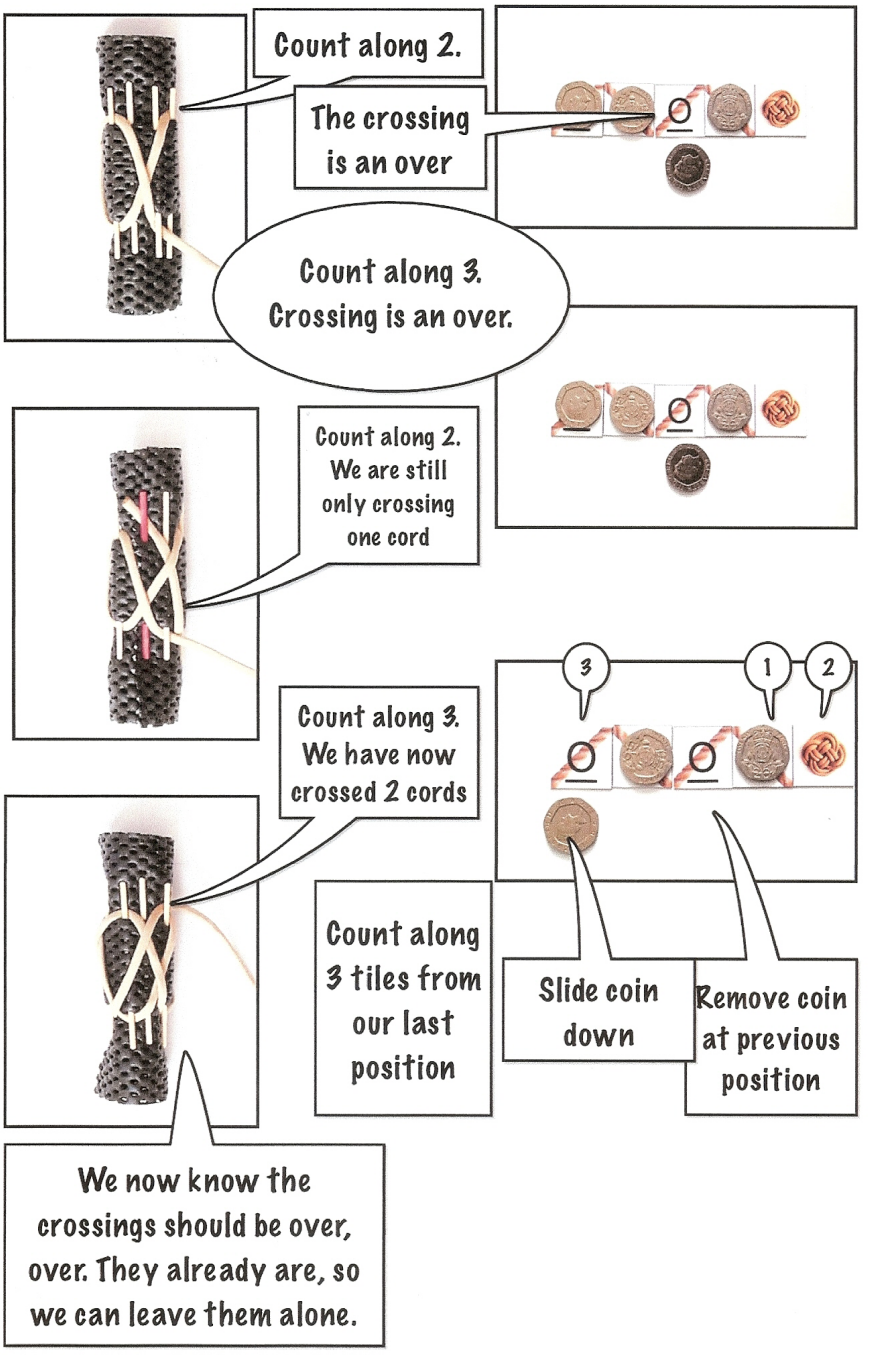
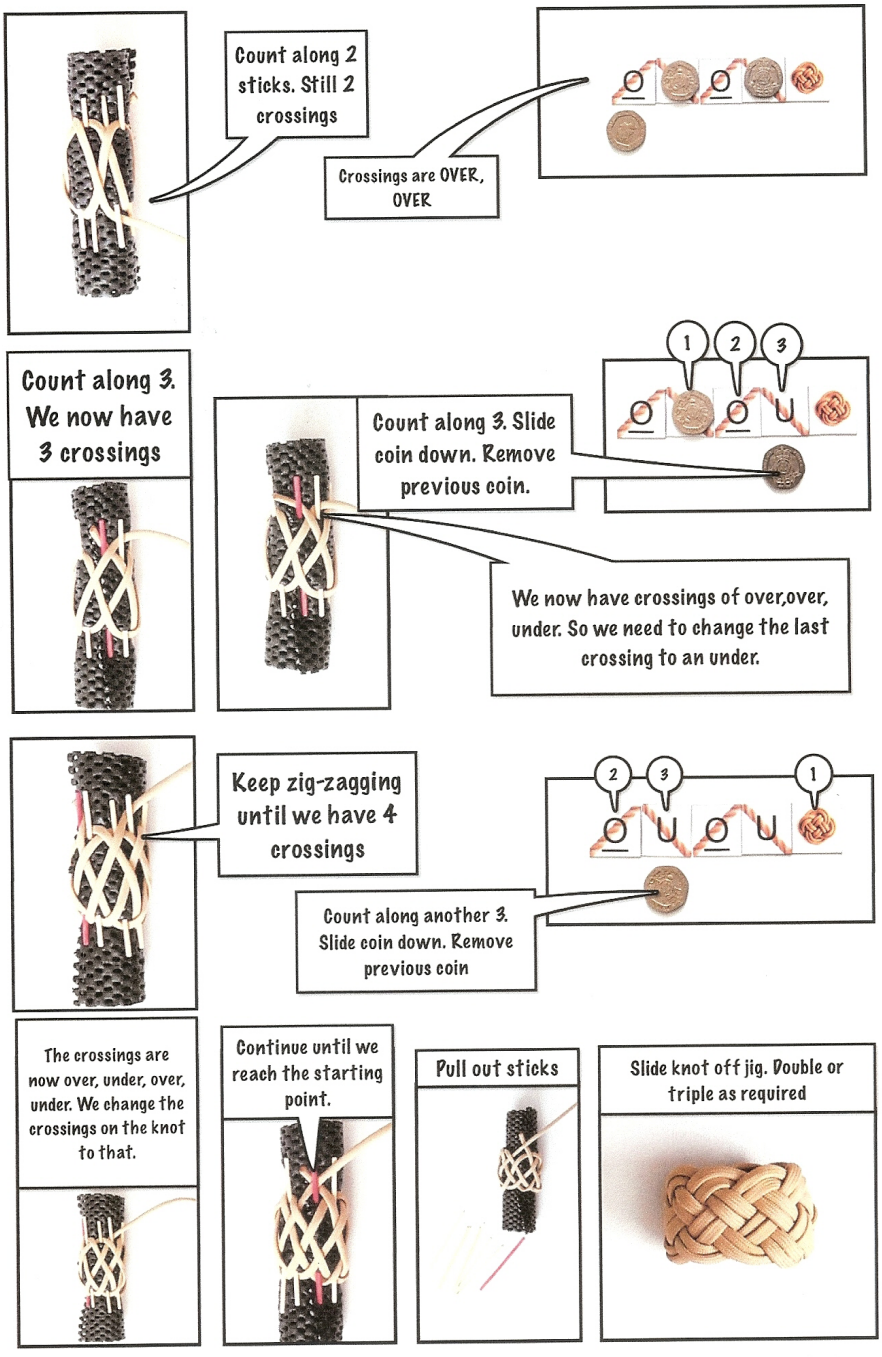
Worked example - 8 Bights 5 Leads

We will work through an 8 bight 5 lead Turk's Head. We will split the 5 into 2 and 3 for stepping along the sticks. We will count along by 3 on the tiles, this being the remainder of 8/5.


Tuck cord under top end of stick
We need 4 crossing tiles and an end tile for 5 leads. Working from the end letters, flip if letter is the same. Both pairs are different so no tiles are flipped
Cover letters with coins
Count along 2 sticks. Tuck under bottom end.
Count along 3. Tuck under top of stick
Still haven't crossed another cord
Count along another 2 to bottom end. Still no crossing. (Not shown)
1
2
3
Count along 3. Lower the coin.
When we count along 3 to top end, we cross one cord
We now know the crossing should be an over. Given it is already an over we can leave it alone.
This is how the tiles reveal the type of crossing you need to make.


Count along 2.
The crossing is an over
Count along 3.
Crossing is an over.
Count along 2.
We are still only crossing one cord
Count along 3.
We have now crossed 2 cords
3
1
2
Count along 3 tiles from our last position
Slide coin down
Remove coin at previous position
We now know the crossings should be over, over. They already are, so we can leave them alone.


Count along 2 sticks. Still 2 crossings
Crossings are OVER, OVER
Count along 3. We now have 3 crossings
Count along 3. Slide coin down. Remove previous coin.
1
2
3
We now have crossings of over,over, under. So we need to change the last crossing to an under.
Keep zig-zagging until we have 4 crossings
2
3
1
Count along another 3. Slide coin down. Remove previous coin
The crossings are now over, under, over, under. We change the crossings on the knot to that.
Continue until we reach the starting point.
Pull out sticks
Slide knot off jig. Double or triple as required

If you would like to read more of Darvis's article, please write to the Editor, knottingmatters@igkt.net - Thanks!

This photograph of Jens Gunne Johansen, of Porsgrunn, Norway, by Joern Eik-Nilsen, was sent by Tore Erikson. He (Jens) made the seahorse in the frame and the frame itself - thanks Erik and well done Jens!

Tore also sent us this photograph, taken by Jens, of the lovely ship's bell in a belfry. The size of the photograph was too small for better, larger, reproduction so do please try to keep the size approximately 1 MB in size or a minimum of 480 by 680 pixels. Thanks again for sending this!

From the Editor's Blotter

This issue is a little different again from prior issues - what's new with that? I have provided a compendium of photographs from an excellent report provided, following the Guild's 29th anniversary in 2011, by Henk and Ge Bos-Thoma to add to a compendium of this year's photographs from many sources. I was unable to put the entire report in last year's December Issue, so their contact information is provided for you if you wish to see the other fine photographs that they put together.

The 2012 Annual General Meeting, with knotting displays and demonstrations, was held this year in Hoylake, UK. Hoylake is known for golf (The Royal Liverpool Golf Club's home is here) but not, apparently, knots. However, the street furniture does have a rope theme, having been created in that form (see center pages) by an enterprising manufacturer of wrought and cast iron works. A nearby park area had a very interesting rope "web" for children to climb on (below), so maybe there is a ropewalk lurking in hostory somewhere nearby? Sincere thank go to Barry Mault for having put together this AGM meeting and social affair.
Happily knotting through life.....

Branch News

The IGKT Solent Branch February Meeting was held on the 14th.of February. With that date there was only one knot that could be the knot of the day…True Lovers Knot. This is an exercise that the members complete between meetings and bring along. There were some interesting differences between the knots as described in our various books. Ashley's is taken as the ultimate reference when naming knots.

We then had a discussion about Knot Boards. This followed a request from the branch. There were about 6 boards brought along, and a number of pictures of other knot boards from a range of backgrounds. There was a board made in the 1950s with symmetrical right and left handed knots arranged on a hammock end. There were a range of knots taken from Charles L Spencer. The backing was red velvet, making a great contrast with the natural tones of the rope. In the sailing Club House used for meetings there is a board made by French seamen and labelled in French. Some knots seem recognisable, many harder to place. More knots, more names!

We heard that HMS Ark Royal had been supplied with about 300 books per year by Lloyds names. There was a need to provide a present for these people, but what to give those who have just about everything? With just under 2 days notice four boards were produced. We had a look at the photographs that had been taken of the boards.

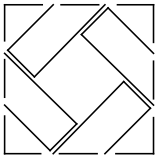
There was a fascinating tale of a large board found in an antique shop. The maker's name was on the back. In a significant feat of determination every local with that name was phoned until the original maker was found. We then saw two boards used for teaching. Bowlines on one, and flat mats on the other. Against a black background it was easy to see how the knots were formed. There was a knot board on canvas. Like most of the boards there is a model ship in the centre which meant that careful handling was needed. Finally a picture of a Year 2K2 board compiled by Dr Ian Crabbe showing work from various Guild Members.

The range of boards covered works of art, teaching aids and physical stores of knotting information. Some were all three.
Submitted by Andy Hudson

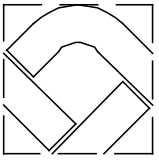
How I Did It (Playing Card Case)

by
Jim Caswell

I use, what I call, a "tile" method for working out knot patterns for objects like playing card cases. I started initially doodling on graph paper (and that works well enough) but I now use a CAD programme (TurboCAD). The graphics are not complicated and I'm sure any drawing or graphics programme would work as well. After a bit of experimenting I found that, with the following three basic tile designs, just about any regular shaped mat pattern can be created - it works well for Turk's-heads too: -



Base Tile

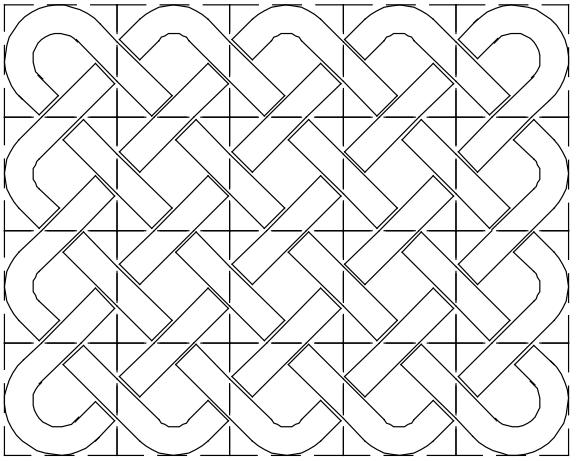


Edge Tile

Corner Tile

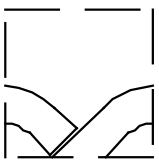
The "Edge" and "Corner" tiles are not really necessary as they are just a refinement of the "Base" tile but, for me, their use adds a more "complete" appearance to a pattern.

With a CAD programme you have access to basic functions of 'copy', 'rubber stamp', 'rotate', 'mirror' etc. so, to create a regular mat design all I need do is copy, rubber stamp, and rotate my three tiles as necessary in a grid pattern. For example; a simple 5x4 bight mat pattern needs 6 Base + 10 Edge + 4 Corner Tiles: -

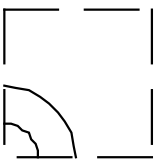


This is a good example as it illustrates an important property. In a regular mat pattern of this type, the relationship between the number of column and row bights obey the same 'highest common denominator' rule that applies to Parts and Bights of Turk's-heads. In the example [*above*], the highest [*lowest?*] common denominator of 5 and 4 is 1 so only one strand required. As an aside; I was quite pleased with myself when I realised this but it was only a few weeks later that I read in a book on Celtic Knot Design that the Celts well understood this rule and used it to ensure their knot designs were single strand which gave them magical properties. Nothing is new under the sun.

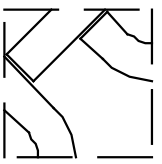
Three more tiles (to date) complete the set: -



Half Edge



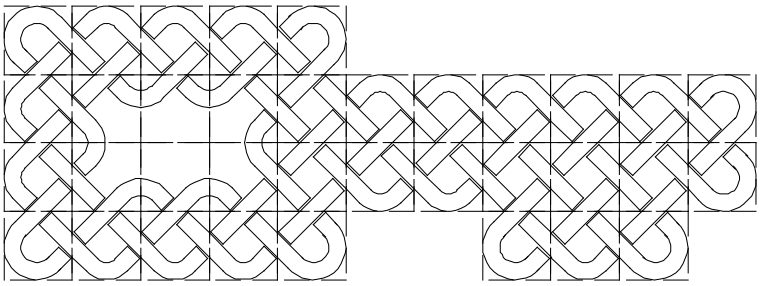
Half Corner



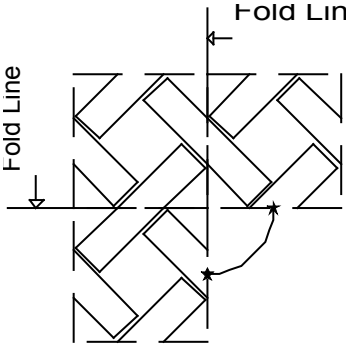
Internal Corner

These are “half bight” tiles. I rarely need to use them but have found them useful to make patterns fit given dimensions. The “Half Edge” tile is necessary when experimenting with Turk’s-heads with ‘odd’ number of parts.

With these few tiles virtually any shape can be modelled and foundations for most “basket weave” type knots produced and illustrated. For example: -



Another basic requirement is to be able to “go round corners”. That takes care of itself by leaving an open corner and, as the following example shows, when the edges are folded together the strands correspond with the correct parity: -



If you don’t have access to a CAD or suitable graphics programme the same results can be achieved using the ‘cut and paste’ graph paper method.

The final part of the puzzle is how to work out what size you need. I have designed the 'tiles' to result in an open weave to make it easier to visualise the pattern, count the parts and manage the strands when working the knot but, once in place and the strands are 'pulled up', each 'tile' is effectively one bight wide so, for calculation purposes (thanks to Pythagoras), the width and height of each tile is equal to the strand width multiplied by the square root of two: -

Tile Size = Strand Width x 1.414

With the above tools, my first step in creating pattern for a project like the Playing Card Case is having a concept of how the case is to work. After deciding on two-part sleeve arrangement, calculations and considerations to determine required sizes were: -

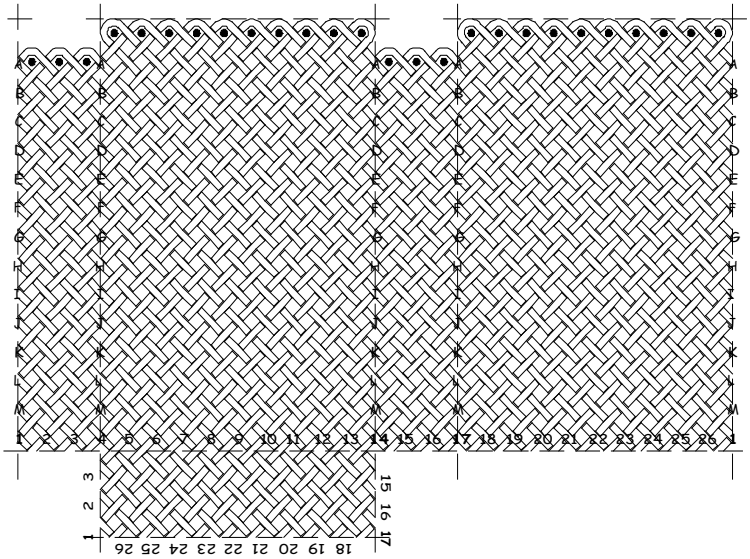
The pack of cards measured 90mm x 60mm x 18mm and I wanted to use a strand width between 3mm and 5mm so; the calculated tile size would need to be between: -

3mm x 1.414 = 4.2mm AND 5mm x 1.414 = 7.1mm

The dimensions were very conveniently multiples of 6 so a tile dimension of 6mm would fit requirements very neatly. With a tile dimension of 6mm then the strand width has to be: 6mm / 1.414 = 4.24mm. Therefore, the basic pattern is: -

Front and Back:	15 x 10 tiles
Two Sides:	15 x 3 tiles
Base:	10 x 3 tiles

I decided it might work better to allow some space at sides to provide access to cards so I reduced the sides by one row to 14 x 3 tiles. Final pattern for bottom half of case was: -



Final pattern for top half of the case was the same as the bottom but with three rows of tiles removed from front and back and two sides so that top half didn't completely cover bottom half (this was purely a design decision). Both patterns resulted in single strand solutions. I believe the Ancient Celts would approve.

The patterns were printed about 25% larger than finished size to provide room to move in working. Wood blocks were cut to fit and pattern glued to blocks using PVA glue. I also gave each block a couple of coats of the PVA to seal and preserve for reuse later.

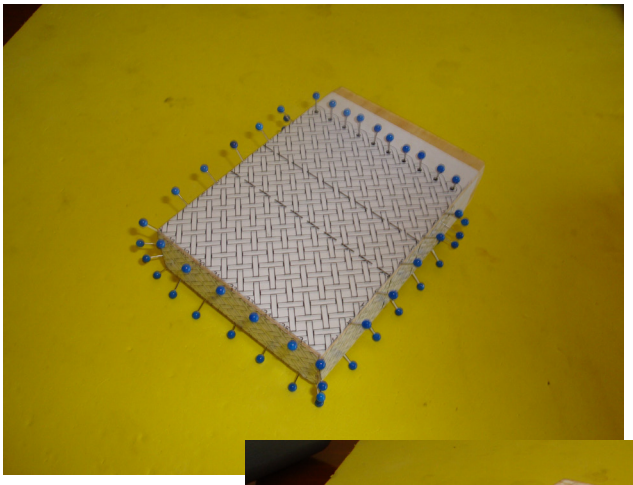
NOTE: If I need to work with a fixed width strand (I.e. pre-cut lace or chord) then I do my calculations based on strand width and make the tile size fit the strand.

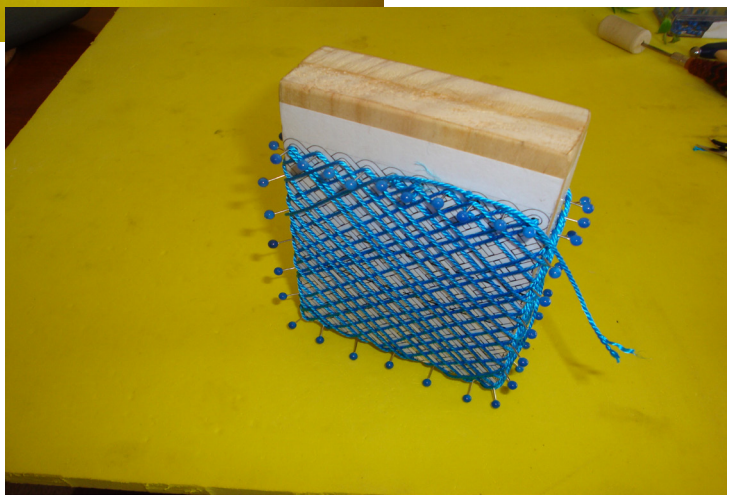
If you don't have access to a CAD or suitable graphics programme the same results can be achieved using the 'cut and paste' graph paper method.

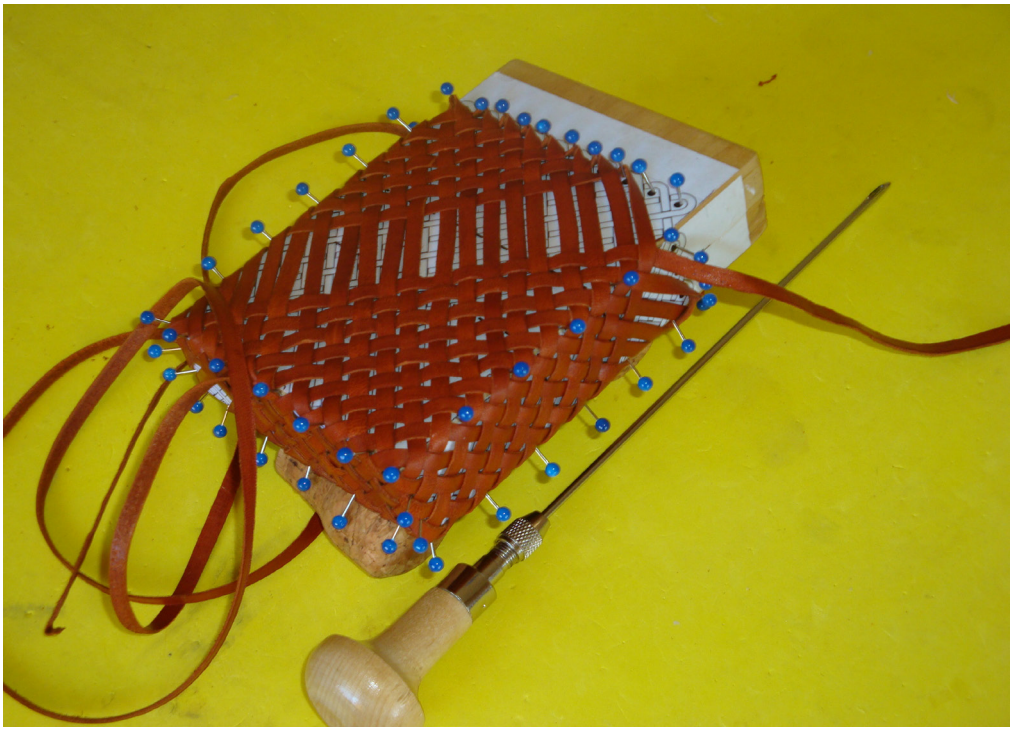
Once the pattern block is prepared, I use mapping pins to provide guides and hold bights in place. I run a string line around the strand path to verify pattern and determine length of strand to prepare.

I cut my strands from kangaroo hide by hand. To get a strand width of 4.24mm I cut initial strand at about 7-8mm, wet and stretch until no stretch left, then recut to final width. Thankfully, kangaroo hide is very forgiving and doesn't matter if it is not precise to the second decimal.

Pattern Block with pins [***top***] and with string [***bottom***]





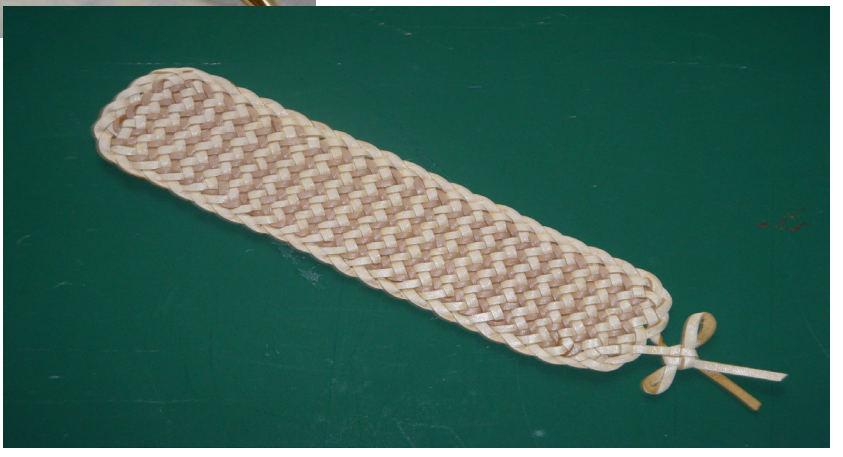


Pattern block with leather strand being worked.

When completed on the pattern block the bottom case was removed and tightened down onto the pack of cards. The top case was tightened down onto the bottom case. Where it is not practical to tighten down onto the actual object, I prepare a woodblock cut to the finished size for the purpose.

I have not as yet had any insights on how to predict the number of strands a three-dimensional knot such as this will require. If any members have any suggestions on this I'd be very pleased to hear them. I do however get a great sense of satisfaction when I discover the solution is a single strand but I am no longer disappointed if not because it opens up opportunities to work in strands of different colour and see what patterns emerge.

Using this method, apart from the card case, I have also completed mobile phone cases, camera cases, a wallet and several bookmarks. I have to say the wallet was a bit ambitious and took quite some time and patience but was a great learning experience. Question now is "what to try next?"



Lindsey,

The attached [*below*] is a a large Cable Eye splice being completed at the Gourock Rope Works, Gourock, Scotland circa 1950. Just visible to the left of the splice may well be either the end of a large fid or possibly a heaver used to work the strand of rope in.

Des Pawson MBE

Splicing an Eye into a Towing Cable.

Late News - In Memoriam

Terry Ridings passed away in February 2012. He was a member from Salt Spring Island, Canada and we would like to know if any members have any personal memories of Terry they would like to have posted here?
Our condolences to his family.

Future Meetings

Advance notice of the Half-yearly meeting October 6-7 2012
This gathering will be held on the beautiful three-masted barque, ***Mercator***, now a museum-ship in the Channel port of Ostend, Belgium.
[http://www.zeilschip-mercator.be/en/x/81/home]
Meeting organiser: Willaert Geert, willge@telenet.be

2013 is coming

The Honorary Secretary's pleas have been answered - the 2013 AGM and Knotting Symposium (Gathering of Knot Tyers) is to be in Long Beach, CA, USA aboard the **Queen Mary**. The event will take place from Thursday May 9, 2013 to Sunday May 12, 2013 and will include knot tyers from all round the world. Contact Lindsey Philpott [***knottingmatters@igkt.net***] An additional AGM gathering is also being organised in Henley-on-Thames. The meeting in Henley-on-Thames is being finalized as we go to press. Watch this space!

The meeting on the QM is all systems go! Rooms have been reserved, requiring only that you book through their web-site at:
[http://www.queenmary.com/Rates-Reservations.aspx]
OR, you may wish to telephone at **011-877/342-0742**

Either way, the rate has been negotiated at $149 per double room per night, starting on Thursday May 9, 2013 and ending with checkout on Sunday May 12, 2013 and **BE SURE** to ask for "**IGKT Knotting Symposium**" or you will not get this low rate! There are also other hotels in the area - but this is the Queen Mary Hotel - *on the ship* - how romantic is that! Details of travel locally will be available in a special package to be sent to attendees, including details of airlines, car rentals, buses, taxi service, shuttle service and local free shuttle tram service. More details to come of attractions, dining, travel, etc., in the area - book now!

Book Review
Geoffrey Budworth

THE ULTIMATE BOOK OF DECORATIVE KNOTS

© 2010 Lindsey Philpott

published by Skyhorse Publishing Inc. (New York) www.skyhorsepublishing.com

ISBN-10: 1-60239-242-0 ISBN-13: 978-1-60239-242-7 Price: US $29.95 (UK equivalent: £18.55)

Within this hardback book and glossy dust jacket are no less than 627 pages in 11 chapters titled: Getting Started; Materials, Methods, Measurements and Tools; Flat Knots; Braids, and Plaits; Sinnets; Covering Knots; Purely Decorative Knots; Netting and Woven Knots; Turk's Head Knots; Knob knots; and Ornamental Knots. Five appendices are headed: Projects; a List of Contacts; a Glossary (from 'Bosal' via 'Knittle', 'Pleaching' and 'Skiving' to 'Yarns'); a Bibliography (79 titles from 1847 to 2009); and an Index; followed by 13 lined but otherwise blank pages for the reader's own use labelled My Favourite Knots.

Weighing 1•5kg and measuring 28•5 cm x 22•5cm x 3cm, this hefty manual has around 1,700 coloured illustrations of step-by-step tying stages – many life-sized – plus the completed specimens. I counted some 150 individual knots, but multiply this number by the uncounted enlargements and elaborations, as well as alternative tying methods. Complementing them are several evocative knot pictures from worldwide sources … see the English actress and model Keira Knightley on the red carpet at the 2006 Golden Globe Awards.

Lindsey is a leading light – ashore and afloat – on the south Californian rope-work and rigging scene, a founder and past-president of the Pacific Americas Branch of the Guild, and the current editor of Knotting Matters. This book follows his earlier (2005) Knots – a Complete Guide. A civil engineer by profession, he is at heart a teacher, keen to demystify fancy knotting, who laces his text with helpful tying tips, and answers to knotting FAQs. He defines and differentiates terms such as 'decorative' and 'ornamental' as well as 'braid', 'plait' and 'sinnet'. Could the latter actually come from 'sennite' (outmoded English: a seven day week)? Also, whenever possible, he unselfishly names those individual knot tyers – often Guild members – who deserve a mention and credit.

The book's knotty nomenclature is mostly standard, with the caveat that where nationalities are assigned – Celtic, Chinese, English, French, Japanese, Korean (rarer, this one), Russian and Spanish – these adjectives may derive from usage rather than fact. The prettiest couple of names to catch my eye are the Blue and Golden Rose Knots; while two that were unfamiliar to me, because I have always known them by other titles, are the Chinese Buddha Knot and the Emperor (of Snake Band) Sinnet.

This action-packed compendium enables beginners and improvers to do ambitious fancy knotting; and it may also enhance the repertoires of more accomplished exponents.
G.B.
[***Thanks, Geoffrey, for this latest review! - Ed***]

Alaskan Branch
Every Thu. evening 6:00 to 8:00
Anchorage Senior Center
1300 E 19th Ave., Anchorage, AK
Contact Charles Rigden
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East Anglian Branch
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Midlands Branch
The Old Swan, Netherton
Contact: Bruce Turley
Tel: 0121 453 4124

Northwest Branch
Contact: Dave Walker
Tel: 01244 682 117

Netherlands
Every last Saturday (except Dec.)
De Hoop, Rotterdam
Contact: Jan Hoefnagel
Tel: 078 614 6002

NAB - Mid-Atlantic Region
Contact: Michael Pollock
See handbook for details

NAB - Knot in the Middle
Contact: Rusty Helms
See Handbook for details

Pacific Americas Branch
Second Tuesday of each month
At the Whale & Ale (upstairs)
San Pedro, California
Contact: Jimmy Williams
Tel: (1) 310/679-6864
e-mail: igktpab@gmail.com

Solent Branch
Second Tues. of even-number months
Fareham Sailing and Motor Boat Club
Fareham, Hants, UK
Contact: Ken Yalden
Tel: +44(0) 23 9225 9280

Surrey Branch
Meetings are held at Guildford District Scout Centre, Nightingale Road, Guildford, starting at 20:00 hrs. Please phone for more details
Contact: Howard Denyer
Tel: +44(0) 1483 536 401
www.surreyknots.org.uk

Sweden
Contact: Christoffer Åström Tel: +46 736 381 731 e-mail: christoffer@knopar.se

West Country Knotters
Last Sat. of odd months @13:00 hrs
The Benjamin Perry Boathouse Activity and Training Centre
Phoenix Wharf, Lower Guinea Street, Bristol BS1 6TJ
Contact: Richard Hopkins for directions
Tel: 0117 986 7146
May be subject to change - call first

West Yorkshire Branch
Contact: David Pearson
Tel: 0113 257 2689

Back cover - another unusual form of admiration being expressed for the bell-rope - see the letter on page 8 from Penny Bodger.